



DRAFT **Bardstown** **Road Report**

Challenges, Responses,
and Opportunities



**Councilwoman Cassie
Chambers Armstrong**

DRAFT Bardstown Road Report

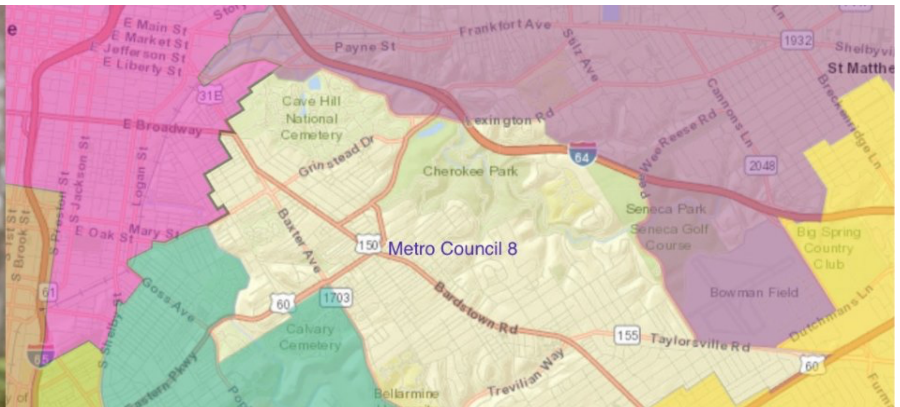
The Bardstown Road/Baxter Ave. corridor is one of the most important—and iconic—commercial corridors in the city of Louisville. It is full of small businesses, wonderful restaurants, and vibrant nightlife. It cuts through many dense residential neighborhoods, which are also full of character and history. It is one of the most walkable areas of the city. It is bordered by two world-renowned Olmsted Parks, as well as other green space.

In recent years, the corridor—like other urban corridors—has faced challenges. This is why one of the first things I did when I took office was to hold a town hall about Bardstown Road. I also regularly have meetings with residents, small business owners, and other stakeholders about what we can do to improve the corridor. This report details some of our ongoing issues along Bardstown Road, what my office (in conjunction with many other great partners) has been doing, and what possible next steps could look like.

It's going to take all of us to make our District the best that it can be. I look forward to working with you all on solutions

With gratitude,

Cassie Chambers Armstrong



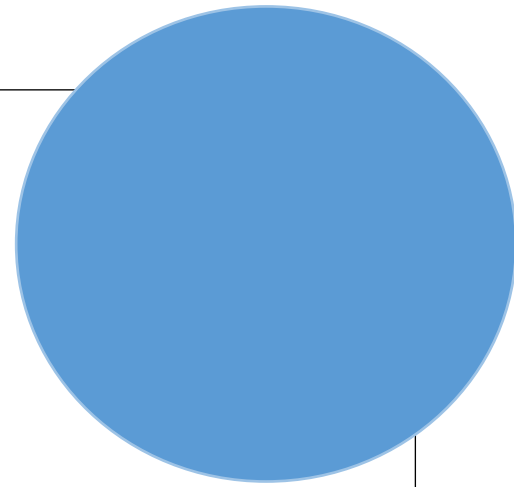
Council Member
Cassie Chambers Armstrong

District 8
Representative

About This Report

There is a lot being done at a citywide level that will have an impact on many of the issues on Bardstown Road. For example, Metro Council is considering a resolution to invest a significant portion of our \$350 million federal stimulus dollars into homelessness issues—including significant investments in affordable housing, supportive housing, and more. These programs would help our unhoused neighbors in District 8 tremendously. Similarly, Metro Council invested significant resources in this past budget cycle into the Group Violence Intervention program, which is expected to have an impact on gun violence throughout the city.

Those initiatives are important, and I wholeheartedly support them. This report, though, primarily focuses on District 8 specific initiatives. Our goal is to help District 8 residents understand the hyper-local work that we are doing in the Highlands so that they can give us feedback on this work and the direction they would like it to go in. Some city-wide initiatives will be mentioned, but they will not be discussed at length. We will, however, continue to work hand in hand with our city, state, and federal partners on efforts that benefit the District 8 community.



Supporting Small Businesses

The Problem: It's no secret that Covid has impacted small businesses throughout our city, and the Bardstown Road corridor is no exception.

What's Being Done: We partnered with the District 8 Advisory Board, multiple neighborhood associations, and the Highlands Commerce Guild to launch Neighborhood Nights. This monthly event (currently the third Wednesday of every month) features trolley rides, live music, and specials at local businesses. We are still learning and refining the format, but we've received an enthusiastic response from residents and the business community.

What's Next: We will continue to work with our partners to make Neighborhood Nights a success and encourage residents in the area to support our local businesses. We will use our neighborhood dollars to support small business events, such as the Buy Local Fair and Bardstown Road aglow. We will continue to think creatively, and talk to our business community about their needs and how we can support them.

Questions for Feedback

What else do you think we can do to support small businesses in the area? How can we make Neighborhood Nights better?

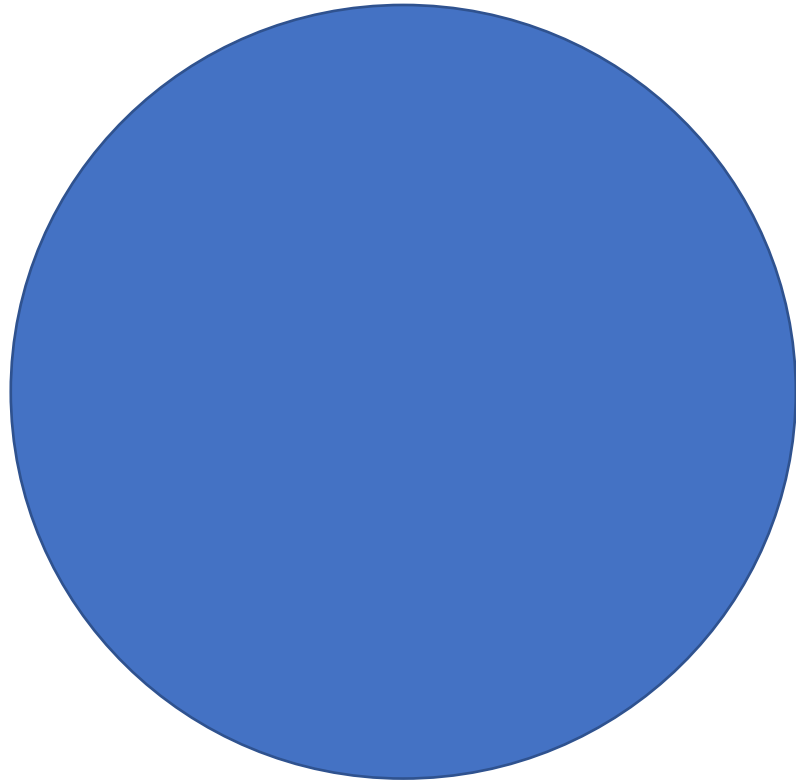
Gun Violence

The Problem: This is, in my opinion, the most serious issue facing the Highlands. It is not something that we have historically had to deal with, and the spike in gun-related deaths and injuries has been alarming to many people—myself included. I think it's important that our first thought always go to the victim, and the lives that are changed.

What's Being Done: LMPD has increased the number of officers along the corridor on Friday and Saturday nights from five officers to twelve officers. This increased detail will continue to be in place. They have also taken measures to increase officer visibility, such as more frequently walking the corridor and visibly parking vehicles. They have also barricaded certain parking lots where people tend to congregate for informal parking lot parties. Alcoholic Beverage Control has sent officers out to ensure liquor license laws are being followed, and we have received reports of numerous violations.

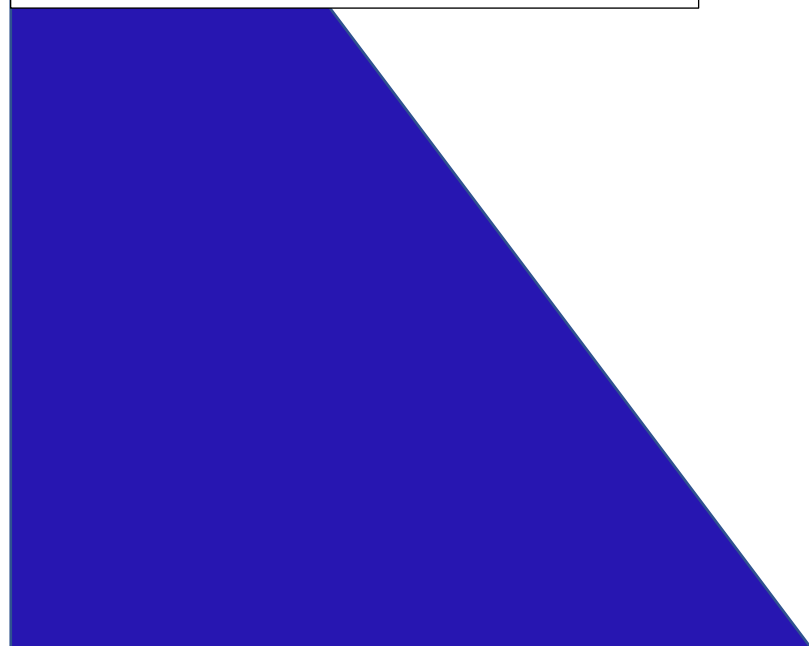
At a city level, the Group Violence Intervention program should begin ramping up in the next couple of months. This program has had incredible results in the other cities that have tried it. In Boston, for example, it decreased youth homicides by over 60%. In Cincinnati, it reduced group-involved homicides by more than 40%. I am hopeful about this as a tool to combat gun violence in our city.

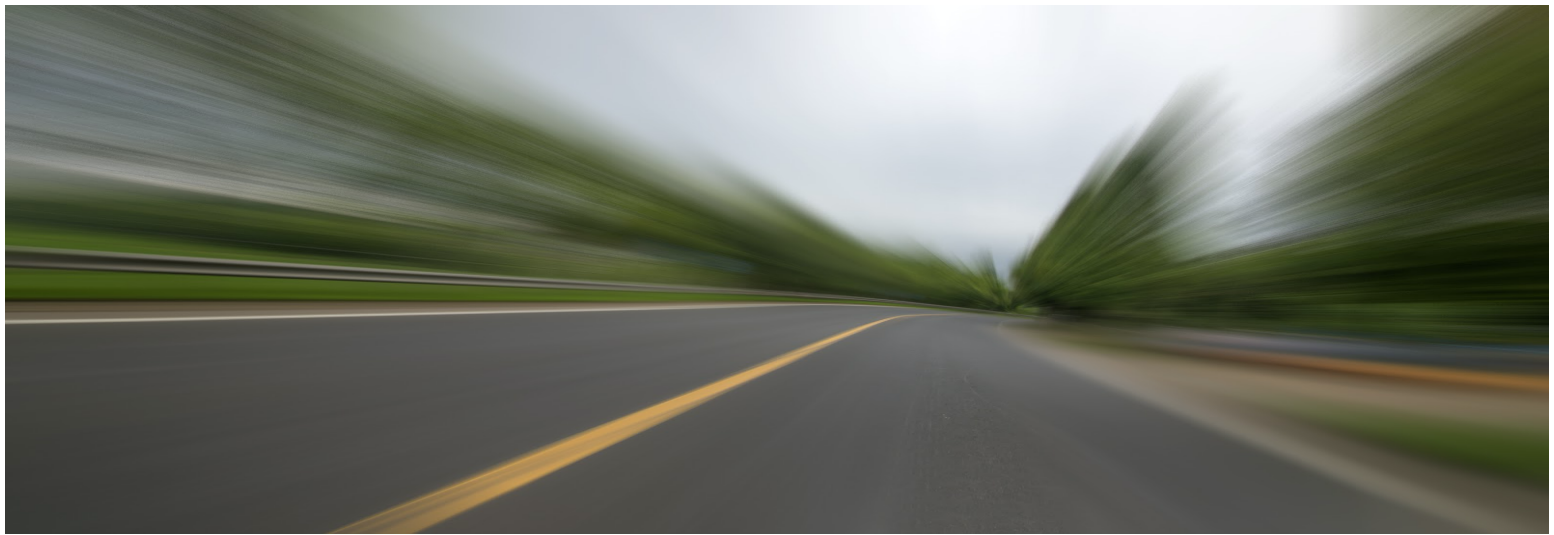
What's Next: Gun violence is complicated, and our hands are tied locally by a lot of state and federal laws. But I want to hear from you—what do you think would help address the gun violence issues on Bardstown Road? I've heard ideas ranging from rolling back the liquor license hours temporarily to 2 a.m. (scientific studies suggest this measure can significantly impact violent crime), to requiring establishments that stay open until 4 a.m. to have private security.



Questions for Feedback

What are your ideas for decreasing gun violence in the Highlands? What things have you heard about other cities doing that you would like to try here? What are your ideas for working with state and federal partners to change the law?





Traffic and Noise Issues

The Problem: Residents have long identified traffic as a concern on Bardstown Road. Most often, we hear from people about drivers who speed along the corridor and/or run red lights. We also hear concerns about drag racing and vehicles that have been altered to be loud. Although traffic can seem like a small concern, we know that we lose lives each year because of these issues.

What's Being Done: LMPD has regularly assigned officers to do traffic enforcement shifts in the Highlands. These shifts have resulted in some drivers being issued speeding tickets and warnings for noise ordinance violations. However, with the current officer shortage and the prevalence of traffic safety issues, LMPD does not have the resources to monitor and ticket every violation.

For that reason, we have been working with LMPD and Public Works on other strategies to make our streets safer. We allocated funds for a portable driver feedback machine, which LMPD can move to different locations. This machine flashes driver's speeds and collects data on traffic patterns, which can be followed up with changes to the built environment and traffic enforcement as needed. If you have an area you'd like to see the feedback sign spend some time, please let us know and we will add it to the spreadsheet.

What's Next: Many other cities and states have implemented automatic traffic enforcement—devices such as cameras that can automatically issue citations for driver's going over certain speeds, running red lights, or engaging in other traffic violations. These measures aren't currently allowed under state law, however we are working with state partners to explore changing state law. These changes would let us make the decision locally about whether these automatic enforcement devices are a good idea for our city. We are planning a town hall this fall to specifically address this issue.

Regarding the noisy vehicles issue, we are considering some type of ordinance to limit driving vehicles that have been altered to be noisy in residential areas after a certain time. For example, we learned that many loud motorcycles have had the baffles removed. Perhaps an ordinance could prohibit driving de-baffled motorcycles in residential areas after 10 p.m.

Questions for Feedback

How could we change our noise ordinance to address concerns around noisy vehicles? How do you feel about automatic enforcement (i.e. cameras)? Should we be able to use noise/red light/speed cameras to automatically issue tickets? What other ideas do you have?



Litter

The Problem: This is one of the issues we hear about most frequently, and we take it seriously! Usually, we hear complaints on Sunday morning, after people have been out on Bardstown Road on Saturday night.

What's Being Done: We were proud to partner with many of the neighborhood associations in District 8—as well as other stakeholders (like Olmsted Parks Conservancy and MSD)—to do a massive spring cleanup in the district (see the graphic below). We received such good feedback (and had so much fun), that we made Sunday morning cleanups a regular occurrence. Thanks to our neighborhood association partners for helping us recruit volunteers and Brightside for providing the supplies. If you want to sign up for a Sunday shift, please let us know.

We've also worked with the city to get make sure we are devoting other resources to keeping our neighborhood clean. Those include the Clean Collaborative, who spent several days picking up litter along the corridor. We have also partnered with Solid Waste for increased street sweepings. Businesses are responsible for keeping the area in front of their property free from litter, so we partnered with the Original Highlands Neighborhood Association to draft a letter reminding businesses of this obligation and some of the available resources. If your neighborhood association would like to partner on a similar letter please let us know.

What's Next: I've been an outspoken advocate for the Ambassador Program—individuals whose job it is to walk along the corridor, pick up litter, check in on businesses, connect unhoused individuals to resources, help clean up graffiti, and generally be a positive, visible presence in the neighborhood. Metro Council recently allocated \$800k to place Ambassadors in neighborhoods around the city, and the Highlands is an excellent candidate to receive Ambassadors. I hope to be able to make a formal announcement soon. What do you think? Will Ambassadors make a difference?

Questions for Feedback

What do you think about bringing the Ambassador program to the Highlands? What are your other ideas for keeping the Highlands clean and litter-free?

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS:



Belknap Neighborhood Association
Bonnycastle Homstead Association
Cherokee Triangle Association
Cherosen Neighborhood Association
Deer Park Neighborhood Association
Girl Scouts
Highlands Commerce Guild
Highlands Douglass Neighborhood Association
MSD
Olmsted Parks Conservancy
Original Highlands Neighborhood Association
St. Agnes School
St. Paul United Methodist Church
Tyler Park Neighborhood Association
Upper Highlands Neighborhood Association
Anytime Waste Solutions
Park Side Bikes

Pedestrian Safety/Walkability

The Problem: The Bardstown Road Safety Study, spearheaded by Councilman Coan and available on the District 8 website, clearly shows the safety challenges motorists and pedestrians face on the corridor. That report made several recommendations on how to improve pedestrian safety, including improving crosswalks, changing the traffic pattern, and more.

What’s Being Done: We launched a pedestrian issues survey to help us understand what areas of improvement the community would like us to focus on. We received feedback from hundreds of residents, and did a virtual presentation of the results, which you can view a video of on our Facebook page. We have finished analyzing the results, and we will advocate our local Public Works and KYTC partners to allocate funding to implement the community-identified priorities. Many of these priorities are covered in other categories in this report. For example, the single biggest challenge to pedestrian activity that people identified was speeding vehicles. We hope that our efforts to purchase a District 8 driver feedback machine will help in this area.

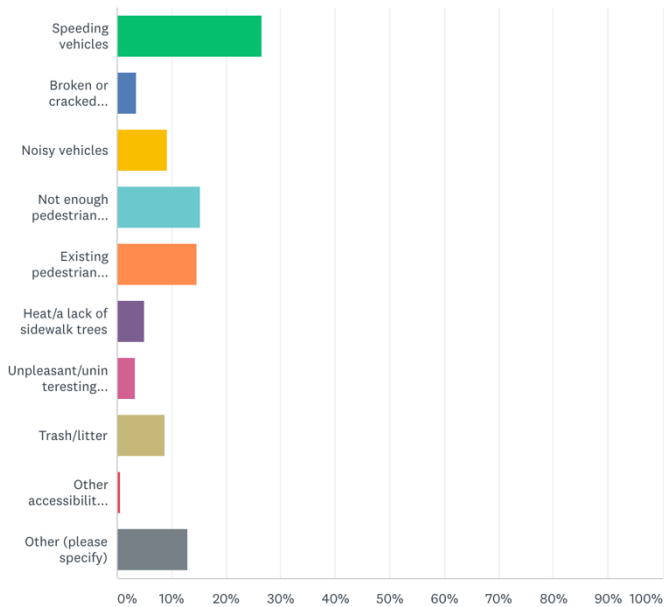
What’s Next: Bardstown Road is a state road, which means that ultimately changes to the built environment must go through state approval. We are setting aside money in our capital funds to invest in capital improvements that the state approves (ideally, we would like to upgrade a few crosswalks to have flashing lights and better visibility). But your continued feedback and advocacy is key.

Questions for Feedback

Other than changes to the traffic pattern and crosswalks, what can we do to make Bardstown Road more pedestrian-friendly?

Which of the following issues MOST concerns you about being a pedestrian on Bardstown Road?

Answered: 527 Skipped: 3



Supporting Our Unhoused Neighbors

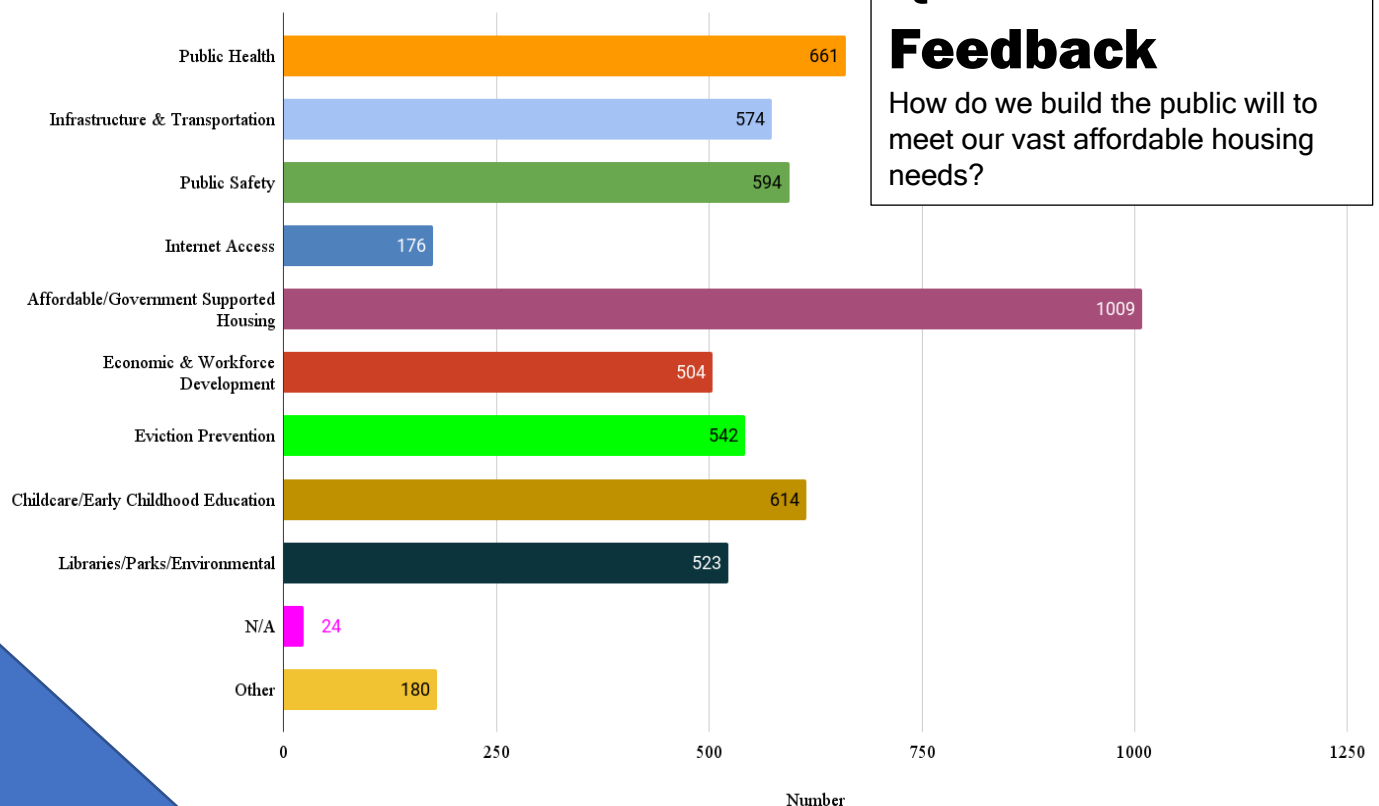
The Problem: Our city has an affordable housing crisis—we simply don't have enough housing for low-income people in our community. Our 2019 Housing Needs Assessment showed that we are 30,000+ units short for people in the lowest income bracket. This shortage explains why so many of our neighbors experience housing insecurity, face eviction, and may find themselves unhoused. We see the impacts of those issues daily along the corridor.

What's Being Done: I have been a vocal advocate for investing in affordable housing and services for our unhoused community. The community seems to agree, as Louisvillians ranked it first among the categories they wanted to see American Rescue Plan dollars (our federal stimulus money) be invested. You can see those survey results in the graphics below.

On Monday, August 9, Budget Chair Bill Hollander filed a resolution setting our priorities for spending this money, and affordable housing/services for people who are unhoused at the top of the list. I support investing at least \$100 million of our American Rescue Plan dollars into building more affordable housing, building more supportive housing (which provides in-home services and case management to individuals with mental disabilities or addictions), and providing services to our unhoused community.

What's Next: If you see someone who is unhoused on the corridor, you can always contact my office. We work closely with homeless outreach services, including the LMPD homeless outreach unit, to send people out to connect with these individuals, do assessments, and offer services. My hope is that, in the near future, we will have a flood of additional money available to help transition people into housing so that we can ensure some of our most vulnerable neighbors have safe, affordable places to stay.

Top 3 Priorities



Questions for Feedback

How do we build the public will to meet our vast affordable housing needs?

Beautification

The Problem: We know that urban corridors thrive when their streetscape is interesting and appealing. While there are lots of great pieces to the current streetscape, we've been thinking about ways we can do more.

What's Being Done: Our office has continued to work with the Highlands Commerce Guild to support graffiti removal. We also worked with Trees Louisville to add 112 trees along the Bardstown Road corridor (many of these new trees were sidewalk trees—which we are especially excited about). We are currently exploring an asphalt art pilot project (i.e. a cool looking painted crosswalk), and we have worked with Public Works to submit a permit to KYTC to be able to install a temporary project this fall to test the idea. We are working with KYTC to build support for the idea, and hoping for approval.

What's Next: We want to continue to work collaboratively with organizations on projects such as tree plantings, asphalt art, public art installations, and other beautification efforts. We will set aside \$5,000 of our neighborhood development funds for these efforts. Do you have an idea of how to make our neighborhood more beautiful?

Questions for Feedback

What are your ideas to make our neighborhood more beautiful?

